

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
South Dakota Department of the Military



NOVEMBER IS REMEMBER MONTH

President Donald Trump has proclaimed November as "Veterans and Military Families Month." It's the first time that as a nation we will be encouraged to honor and support our veterans for more than a day. Let's dedicate this month to honor those ordinary people who have done something extraordinary so that we may all enjoy the freedom we treasure today.

Every day, we wake up to the gift of freedom because of the men and women who wore the uniform; that stood guard and protected us. They are the greatest icon of the American spirit.

Their love for this country was so strong, they signed a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount of "up to and including their life." They left home and family having no idea where their mission would take them, living in flawed conditions. They gave everything they had to our country for the entire length of their service. They pushed themselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to be able to serve.

Veterans of all ages have greatly contributed to the future of this country. November provides us all a great opportunity to ask our veterans to share their stories. It's a great opportunity to connect the past and present to the future. Their stories and our learning from them honors and respects our heroes. They can awaken future generations to their potential.

Let us be proud to stand with those who have fought to not only preserve these values for generations to come—but also to show us what it means to live by them every day.

Veterans and families thank you for your service and thank God we live in this great nation and state. You are appreciated and respected today, tomorrow and forever.



Inside this issue:

VA Reducing Dr. Paperwork Time	2
Governor Proclaims Veterans Day	3
Message from Senator Rounds	4
196th Celebrates 60th	5
Halloween at the State Veterans Home	6
Rapid City Stand Down	7
SDDVA/SDDOM Messages	7
SDNG Wins NGB Excellence in Diversity	8
Oglala Sioux Tribe Names New TVSO	9
Wreaths Across America	9
Valentines for Veterans	9
Upcoming Events	11

VA TRYING TO REDUCE TIME DOCTORS SPEND ON PAPERWORK

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is making changes to its Inbox Notifications system, a messaging system intended to communicate important clinical information, such as test results, referrals, medication refills or high-priority messages, but has become bogged down with non-urgent, unimportant information.

The change will give VA's primary care physicians, in particular, more time to devote to patient care.

"The public never sees the excessive amount of e-mails and alerts that take up a doctor's time," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "Some of it is necessary, but other emails do nothing to advance patient care and can, in fact, pose a major safety hazard because of lesser important emails. We want our doctors to have the right information they need to provide quality health care to veterans, and this is a step in the right direction."

Seeing patients is the most fulfilling part of the job of a physician, doctors said, but far too much of their time is spent doing paperwork. It is estimated that doctors spend two hours on administrative work for every hour they spend with patients. That time-consuming activity leads to fatigue and burnout, and is a top frustration for all doctors, including the VA's.

A team, led by White House Fellow Dr. Tina Shah, revamped the message system to decrease the volume of low-value emails and trained clinicians to optimally process their inbox.

Early results show the system is working: Clinicians now spend an hour and a half less on emails per week, opening up more time for more meaningful work and more time with veterans.

"When we let doctors do what they do best — giving care to veterans — we know it improves the care they receive," Secretary Shulkin added. "It's why the VA is one of the best places to work and why our doctors have lower burnout rates than the private sector. This initiative is just one of many underway for the VA to address clinician burnout and improve the quality of our care."



Executive Proclamation

State of South Dakota

Office of the Governor

Whereas, Americans throughout this state set aside Veterans Day for special remembrance of the men and women who have served to protect our freedom; and,

Whereas, Patriotic songs will fill the air at countless ceremonies around the country and at our bases overseas in tribute to those who gave their lives to safeguard our freedom; and,

Whereas, On this special day, our hearts and thoughts also turn to those who were disabled while serving their country, and their sacrifices and hardships, earn daily, the honor and compassion of a grateful state and nation; and,

Whereas, Over 72,000 men and women living in South Dakota have served honorably in the United States Armed Forces; and,

Whereas, From Valley Forge to Afghanistan, through war and peace, valiant Americans have answered the call to duty with honor and dignity, where these brave men and women, and their loved ones, have made significant sacrifice on behalf of our nation; and,

Whereas, With a spirit of pride and gratitude we honor all our veterans; and I invite all citizens of South Dakota to join me in observing Veterans Day through appropriate celebrations, activities, and a moment of silence at 11:00 am:

Now, Therefore, I, Dennis Daugaard, Governor of the state of South Dakota, do hereby proclaim November 11, 2017, as

VETERANS DAY

in South Dakota, a day dedicated to all Veterans and invite all citizens both in public ceremonies and in private thoughts and prayers to gratefully acknowledge our Veterans and honor their proud legacy.



In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the state of South Dakota, in Pierre, the Capital City, this Twenty-sixth Day of October in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Seventeen.

Dennis Daugaard
Dennis Daugaard, Governor

Attest:

Shantel Krebs
Shantel Krebs, Secretary of State

MESSAGE FROM SENATOR ROUNDS

The men and women who wear the uniform of the United States make incredible sacrifices for us, and every year on November 11 we pay tribute to them and all they have done to defend our freedoms. Veterans Day is a reminder to all of us to thank those who have bravely answered the call to serve.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have been working on proposals to improve the quality of life for South Dakota veterans. Our committee has had a productive year, and is looking forward to making even more reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the future. We were happy to see the president sign the Veterans Educational Assistance Act into law in August, after it passed out of the Senate with strong bipartisan support. This bill makes much needed updates to Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, especially for veterans wanting to pursue an education once they enter civilian life.

It included a few measures I introduced, one of which is a provision to add all Purple Heart recipients—regardless of length of time spent on active duty—to the list of eligible veterans who can access full Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. Another included provision will allow for more flexibility in transferring Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to family members of deceased service members. The Veterans Educational Assistance Act will allow more veterans and their surviving family members to pursue educational opportunities to set them up for good-paying careers in a competitive job market.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), under Secretary David Shulkin, has been working to fix the problems plaguing the agency over the past years. While there is still work to be done to improve veteran care, Secretary Shulkin has been committed to the cause and is working to streamline the agency he leads. Recently, the VA proposed its CARE proposal—their vision of the future program to provide care in the community for veterans. I look forward to working with the VA and my colleagues on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to improve care in the community for veterans.

Also this year, the VA announced it would comply with the Emergency Care Fairness Act (ECFA). This is a huge victory for the nearly 600,000 veterans who have been waiting for the VA to follow through on its legal obligations to pay for their emergency room costs at non-VA facilities. Last year, I spoke with an elderly South Dakota veteran who fell down in his home in the middle of the night. His wife called 911 and when the ambulance came to get him, he asked to be brought to a VA facility so he wouldn't have to pay the costly emergency room fees out of his own pocket. He was told that his condition required him to be sent to a non-VA hospital. This veteran was faced with thousands of dollars in medical fees, simply because he wasn't close enough to a VA facility with the needed medical services. We have a moral obligation, and in this case a legal one, to take proper care of our veterans during and after their service to our country. I was happy that the VA made this long-overdue decision, and I look forward to the department finalizing its rules to comply with this law.

On this Veterans Day, we thank our veterans and their families, we remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and we continue doing what we can to improve the lives of the men and women who bravely served our country. The freedoms we enjoy today are a direct result of the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families.

SD GUARD'S 196TH REGIMENT CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF HISTORY

As you drive onto Fort Meade, you know you have entered a part of history. The old stone buildings stand strong from an age of engineering where things were simple and made to last.

Mixed with these historic buildings are more modern buildings made of wood, brick and steel. You drive down streets like Custer Avenue and Reno Road passed repurposed stables and a hall once used for indoor horse training.



Inside this historic architecture lies the lineage of a unit and institution.

The 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute, one of four major commands in the South Dakota Army National Guard, has been training soldiers since 1957 and celebrated its 60th anniversary during a dining-in at Riding Hall on Fort Meade, Nov. 4.

The 196th started out as the South Dakota Military Academy in Mitchell and was tasked with establishing the SDNG Officer Candidate School. There were 33 candidates in attendance at the first drill on Nov. 2-3, 1957. The next summer, 19 candidates from Class 1 graduated after completing annual training at

Camp Rapid.

Attrition was the norm for many years of training soldiers to become second lieutenants during OCS.

Since its inception, the 196th has continued to grow and evolve. One of the biggest changes in the OCS program and at the RTI has been the training culture. The platoon trainers have taken on a larger responsibility in the training with the emphasis changing from a right-of-passage to mentorship and development.

Gone are the days of log chain training aides for corrective action.

The 196th has not just changed its training culture but it has changed structurally as well. It now consists of two battalions.

1st Battalion is located at Fort Meade and conducts OCS and the Warrant Officer Candidate School program. 2nd Battalion is located in Sioux Falls and provides several functional and developmental courses including instruction for military specialty schools and noncommissioned officer courses.

The 196th will likely continue to grow and evolve in the future as it has in the past, but one thing that has remained consistent over the last 60 years is the brotherhood and relationships that have formed under its training.

Like the stone and the brick of historic Fort Meade.



HALLOWEEN AT THE STATE VETERANS HOME



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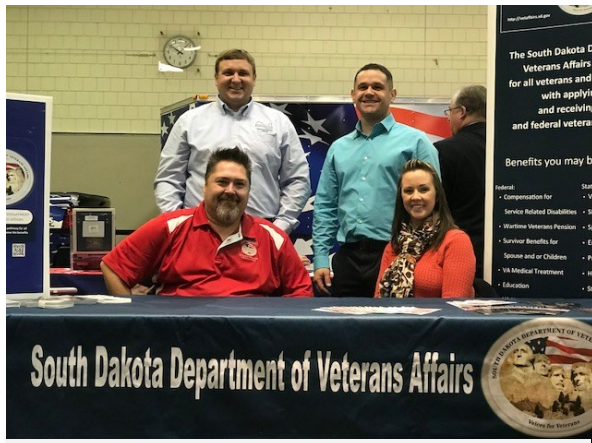
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VETERANS AFFAIRS PARTICIPATES IN RAPID CITY STAND DOWN

SDDVA and our county partners participated in the Rapid City Stand Down this week. Our team had the opportunity to visit with veterans and their families about the benefits and services available to them and their families.



Front Row (l to r) Will Huffmon, SDDVA and Angella Bates, Meade County VSO.

Back Row (l to r) Alex Purcell and Tom Vallette, Pennington County VSOs.



(l to r) Will Huffmon and Tyler Rousselle (SDDVA) and Angella Bates, Meade County.

GREAT MESSAGES TO LISTEN TO

Oahe TV recently interviewed SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman on Military Appreciation Month in South Dakota. His message can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/obMBYsftGL8>.

In addition, Oahe did an interview with Sonja Johnson, director of the South Dakota National Guard Museum. Here is a link to her interview: <https://youtu.be/dOtc3CAE-fg>

SDNG WINS NGB EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY AWARD

The South Dakota Army National Guard won a National Guard Bureau Excellence in Diversity Award for fiscal year 2016 presented during the National Guard Diversity Training Workshop at Camp Robinson's Professional Education Center.

The NGB Excellence in Diversity Awards are presented to outstanding National Guard individuals, organizations, states and territories for significant contributions to diversity and inclusion initiatives.

"Enhancing diversity and inclusion has been one of my top priorities since being appointed to this position in 2011," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, SDNG adjutant general. "The closer that our units represent the overall demographics of the State of South Dakota, the better we will be."

The SDARNG received the award in the Army National Guard organization/unit category, which recognizes significant contributions to readiness with regard to participation, leadership, new initiatives, and exemplifies diversity of thought and inclusion of non-traditional leaders of all ranks.

The SDARNG and its Army Diversity Council have led the state in diversity initiatives along with other community-based organizations and promoted broader diversity and cultural understanding. These initiatives have served to embed diversity in strategic initiatives, as well as within its force

development and recruiting and retention marketing approaches, showcase various internal and external diversity programs linking directly to unit combat readiness.

The SDARNG's Lt. Col. Joe Jacobson, Command Sgt. Maj. Cory Rabenberg and Sgt. Maj. Eric Jennings initiated the award nomination based on community support missions and international participation in the Golden Coyote training exercise.

The SDARNG exercise supported several timber hauling missions to South Dakota's Native American reservations. Five nations - Canada, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Singapore and Suriname - participated in the exercise, along with units from the U.S. Navy, Army Reserve and National Guard from across the nation. In addition, the SDARNG held four celebrations in 2015 in honor of Lakota code talker veterans at locations around the state, which culminated at Crazy Horse Memorial on Veterans Day with over 700 people in attendance.



OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE NAMES NEW TVSO

Oglala Sioux Tribe has selected Darrell Hernandez as their new tribal veterans service officer. Darrell served in the U.S. Navy from 2005-2014.

Darrell's email address is: Darrell.hernandez34@hotmail.com and his phone number is 605.867.2466. His office hours will be 8:00 am—4:30 pm (MT) Monday through Friday.

SDDVA asks that you join us in welcoming Darrell to our network.



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

The South Dakota Funeral Directors Association will again participate in Wreaths Across America, a national program which pays tribute to fallen veterans of all wars during the Christmas season.

A formal wreath presentation will be held at the Flaming Fountain Veterans Memorial on Capitol Lake in Pierre at 11:00 AM on Monday, December 11, 2017.

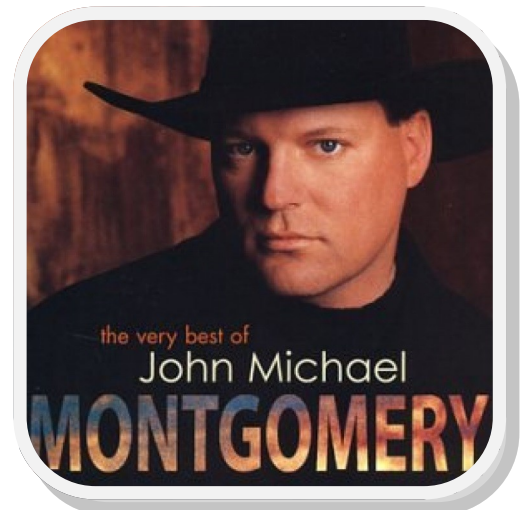
This event is held in conjunction with the Wreaths Across America Project where a wreath is placed at each headstone of our Nation's fallen heroes held that same week at Arlington National Cemetery.

VALENTINES FOR VETERANS

The Sioux Falls VAHCS has announced that John Michael Montgomery will perform at the Valentines for Veterans concert Saturday, February 17, 2018. The concert will be held at the Washington Pavilion at 301 S. Main Avenue in Sioux Falls.

It is the sixth annual concert the Sioux Falls VA has hosted to honor veterans during National Salute to Veterans Month.

We'll let you know when tickets are available.



Upcoming Events

Nov 9-13—VFW Disabled Veterans Hunt—Gettysburg

Nov 10—State Offices Closed

Nov 11—SFVAHCS Service of Remembrance—SFVAHCS—1:30 pm (CT)

Nov 11—SDSU Military Appreciation Day—Kickoff at 2:00 pm (CT)

Nov 11—American Heroes Outdoors Veterans Day Banquet—Aberdeen Elks Lodge 1046—5:00 pm (CST)

Nov 11-12—Sea of Goodwill Equine Experience Retreat—Joy Ranch—Watertown

Nov 15—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—12:00 noon (CT)

Nov 16—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown American Legion—12:00 noon (CT)

Nov 18—Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City VFW Post—10:00 am (MT)

Nov 23-24—State Offices Closed

Dec 2-3—Yellow Ribbon for the 153rd EN—Mitchell

Dec 5—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm (CT)

Dec 12—SDDVA Mini Conference via Skype—10:00 am (CT)

December 25-26—State Offices Closed

2018

Jan 9—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)

Jan 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—RedRossa in Pierre—9:00 am (CT)

Jan 10—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—RedRossa in Pierre—5:00—8:00 pm (CT)

Jan 18—SD American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8—Pierre—5:00 pm (CT)

Jan 28-29—VFW Legislative Conference—Ft. Pierre AmericInn

Jan 29—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Ft. Pierre—6:00 pm—7:30 pm (CT)

Feb 16-18 American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma

Jun 7-10—American Legion State Convention—Spearfish

Jun 14-17—VFW State Convention—Sioux Falls

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>

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